SOCIAL ISSUES

Groups fighting gay rights move to join forces

National plan targets voters to stem 'homosexual agenda'

By **Teresa Owen-Cooper**/Gazette Telegraph

Groups from across the country opposed to homosexual rights are beginning to share strategies aimed at building their movement into a political force to be reckoned with.

But gay rights groups are taking up their own battle stations.

Colorado, which already has been in the spotlight over gay rights issues, is unlikely to be neutral ground.

"This nation is going to have to make a decision on what it does with homosexuality," said Kevin Tebedo, executive director of Colorado for Family Values, which authored Amendment 2. "You have groups out there looking at not reinventing the wheel but wanting to be effective. It was time for people to come together. There are a lot of new groups that have started. This thing (homosexuality) is warming as an issue."

Amendment 2, passed by Colorado voters in November 1992, would have prohibited laws protecting gays from discrimination based on their sexual orientation. The measure was struck down by a Denver district judge and an appeal is pending before the state Supreme Court.

But a flurry of similar laws proposed in other states and passed in some cities has led to the formation of groups on both sides. Those espousing gay rights say homosexuals are unfairly discriminated against in jobs and housing. Those opposed to gay rights say homosexuals should not be granted protected status based on what they refer to as their lifestyle.

The latest topic in the debate is Project Spotlight, A Plan for the Nation. The plan was mailed earlier this month to more than 200 "pro-family" organizations across the country, said Scott Ross, director of the American Family Association, the Cincinnati-area organization that drafted and distributed the plan.

Project Spotlight calls for putting an end to the "homosexual agenda" by educating

Groups/Opponent sees parallels with segregation

From B1

voters. The plan says organizers should begin gathering support at least one year before local elections. The American Family Association, for example, has already targeted November 1995 City Council elections in six Ohio cities.

The plan calls for supporting candidates opposed to gay rights — and making sure those who favor rights for gays are not elected.

Specifically, Project Spotlight calls for identifying all candidates who have been endorsed by gays in the last five years and who currently are being endorsed. A list of these candidates is to be mailed to voters about two weeks before an election.

After those opposed to gay rights are elected, work should begin on repealing human rights ordinances, the plan says.

Also, petition drives opposing "special rights" would be started to repeal or prevent such legislation. Other tactics include establishing 1-900 telephone numbers for people seeking information, advertising on billboards, creating a speakers bureau and distributing a video, Project Spotlight says.

"It (the homosexual agenda) undermines the family," Ross said. "It undermines the values, principles this country was founded on. The (homosexual) agenda covers so many social areas. They want full recongition as a minority. I have a real problem with that. Protected-class status shouldn't be based on behavior. It should be based on who we are, not what we do."

So far, no organization has formally adopted Project Spotlight, although a similar version has been used in Louisville, Ky. And Colorado for Family Values might consider it.

"What I see happening is people at the grass-roots level being frustrated with legislators making decisions that go against their values," said Will Perkins, board chairman of Colorado for Family Values.

In mid-May, Colorado for Family Values brought the leaders of 40 state organizations together at the Glen Eyrie Conference Center in Colorado Springs to discuss strategies for opposing gay rights.

Leaders say Project Spotlight was not formally presented or distributed at the conference but that individual participants talked about it and passed it among themselves. That's exactly what organizers wanted and what gay rights groups didn't want.

"I find it very chilling," said Franklin Whitworth of Ground Zero, a Colorado Springs group that supports gay rights. "The gargantuan vision of this — to eliminate gays and lesbians from all recognition and say in government — is really frightening.

"It targets anyone who has been favorable to the homosexual community. It is designed to eliminate gays and lesbians from viable representation by intimidating elected and appointed officials."

Whitworth said candidates who support AIDS research or domestic partnerships could be targeted. He said Project Spotlight supporters are no different from people who opposed desegregation in the 1960s. They will continue to fight equal rights for racial minorities, women, gays and people with religious beliefs different from their own, he said.

"Our viewpoint is that the core of the segregationists have never given up," said Whitworth, adding that Ground Zero will continue educating the public about the importance of equal rights for all through demonstrations and presentations.

"This is about the white Christian male agenda reasserting their control in America," he said, "and we won't tolerate it."

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Search reduced for woman missing in Rocky Mountain Park since May 19

Associated Press

ESTES PARK — Searchers will continue to look every few days for a high school senior who disappeared May 19 while walking in Rocky Mountain National Park, park officials said Monday.

The effort to find Allison Bierma, 18, of Greeley was reduced to periodic checks of streams and other areas after nothing was found in a search of the area near her car.

The car was parked near the Fern Lake trailhead with the keys locked inside, a mistake her father said was typical of her. There were no signs of foul play but shoe prints indicated she may have changed from moccasins to boots and from shorts and a T-shirt to warmer clothes.

Bierma's boyfriend recently killed himself in the park.

People who saw her the day she disappeared said she had rented a comedy movie to watch with her boyfriend's mother. She was excited about a summer rafting trip and looking to the future, they said.

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ner, **Daniel Moore,** are from Bear Creek High School in Jefferson Couty.

Reed Hendershot, a Colorado Springs School District 11 student, has been named as one of 100 Tandy Technology Scholars. The Doherty High School student was chosen for the $1,000 scholarship from a field of 7,300 nominees. The Tandy awards honor outstanding teachers and students in science, computer science and math.

Phil Gallegos, Wasson High School assistant principal, was chosen Administrator of the Year by Colorado Juvenile Services Inc. for his work with students who are at risk of dropping out or being underachievers. Gallegos, who will be principal of East Junior High School this fall, has implemented several prevention and intervention efforts, including a one-on-one tutoring program

OBITUARIES

GLADYS ESTELLA SHELTON, 84, a homemaker and lifelong resident of Colorado Springs, died May 29, 1994.

A graveside service will be held at 10 a.m. Thursday at Crystal Valley Cemetery, Manitou Springs, with the Rev. K.O. Backstrand officiating.

Friends may call from 2 to 7 p.m. Wednesday at Blunt Mortuary, 2229 W. Colorado Ave.

Mrs. Shelton was born Aug. 21, 1909, in Marceline, Mo., to Ollie and Emma Kay (King) Perry. She was married Oct. 13, 1924, in Colorado Springs to Lawrence Lloyd Shelton, who died in 1983.

She is survived by three sons, Eugene C., Lawrence L. Jr., and William, all of Colorado Springs; two daughters, Norma Sue Beer and [illegible] Shelton, both of Colorado Springs, 11

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